



One Hundred First Legislature - First Session - 2009
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 19

Chairperson: Brad Ashford
Committee: Judiciary
Date of Hearing: January 23, 2009

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

Legislative Bill 19 seeks to create an incentive to encourage couples planning to get married to complete eight hours of marriage education.

The bill would increase the marriage license fee to \$75 and implement a 10-day waiting period. The state would recognize the special interest that the state has in successful and strong marriages by rewarding couples that complete a marriage education course. The incentive would be accomplished by waiving the 10-day waiting period and requiring a marriage license fee of only \$15. Currently, in Nebraska the marriage license fee is \$15 with no waiting period.

The bill would require, as proof of completion, an official state certificate of completion created by Health and Human Services, to be signed by the provider of the marriage education and the couple. This certificate would indicate the couple has completed at least eight hours of marriage education, which would then be presented to the county clerk. The certificate of completion of marriage education would be made available at all county clerk offices to be used by providers.

In addition, LB 19 would give a county judge the ability to waive the 10-day waiting period when presented with compelling circumstances such as terminal illness, or imminent transfer to a combat zone.

Marriage education could be provided by any of the following:

- An official representative of a religious institution or his or her designee
- Any member of the clergy authorized to perform marriages, or his or her designee, including mentor couples or other lay volunteers if they are working in a clergy-supervised program
- A school, college, university, or nonprofit community organization
- Any marriage education provider or program approved by the person performing the marriage, or
- A provider of counseling services that is licensed as such in this state, including a psychologist, or a psychiatrist

The marriage education courses would be required to cover at least four main topics:

- Conflict management in marriage

- Communication skills
- Financial management, and
- Parenting skills

The county clerk would also be required to send a statement of all certificates of completion to Health and Human Services to record how many certificates were collected the previous month. This is a process already required with marriage licenses.

Finally, the bill includes an operative date of January 1, 2010.

Principal Introducer:

Senator Mark Christensen